

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. (Currently Amended) A suture needle ~~and suture assembly, said assembly comprising a suture needle and suture:~~  
said suture needle comprising:
  - (1) a curvilinear, substantially arched shaft ~~tapering at the~~ comprising tapered ends thereof to form forming two tips for impalement of tissue;
  - (2) an inner surface and an outer surface, wherein the side of the shaft wherein the point or points of curvature lie is called the inner side and the other side of the shaft is the outer side;
  - (3) a groove being provided on either the inner or outer surface of the needle approximately equally remotely located from the said tips and running along the length of the needle shaft thereof for substantially housing the suture, wherein the groove forms a cavity having a bottom and an opening between the groove and each tapered end of the shaft; and
  - (4) a hole provided from the bottom of the groove cavity formed by the groove and extending through the shaft to the opposite surface of the shaft for securing the suture;  
wherein said suture is secured to the needle through the hole in the shaft of the needle by a means for fastening, said means for fastening comprising a crimp or plug.
2. (Cancelled)
3. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein ~~the said groove is on either the inner or on the outer surface of the needle.~~

4. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein said the hole is located ~~provided~~ substantially at ~~through~~ the lengthwise center of the said groove.
5. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein said suture comprises ~~[[of]]~~ a broad section having a diameter ~~appropriate to~~ approximately the diameter of the needle and a ~~narrower~~ narrow section having a diameter less than the diameter of the needle.
6. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 5, wherein the said ~~narrower~~ narrow section of the suture ~~may be~~ is integrally formed with the suture or separately provided, ~~the separately provided narrow section being attached at an end of the regular suture.~~
7. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 6, wherein the fastening means is provided on one end of the said narrow section of the suture.
8. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 5, wherein the cavity formed by the groove is ~~sufficient~~ dimensioned so as to only ~~to~~ house the suture having a diameter ~~appropriate to~~ approximately the diameter of the needle, or the ~~narrower~~ narrow section of said suture.
9. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 5, wherein the end of the narrow end section of the suture is housed in the groove, the length of the said narrow section being at least one half of the length of the groove.
10. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein the said hole comprises ~~[[of]]~~ two coaxially aligned hollow cylindrical cavities, ~~with differing~~ wherein the diameter of one of said cylindrical cavities is larger than the diameter of the smaller diameter cylindrical cavity ~~diameters~~.

11. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 10, wherein the smaller diameter cylindrical cavity ~~with smaller diameter~~ terminates at the bottom of the groove, said smaller diameter being equal to or greater than the diameter of the suture to enable threading.

12. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 10, wherein the ~~form of the crimp or plug remains in~~ resides entirely within the larger diameter cylindrical cavity ~~with larger diameter, so as to provide the profile of the needle surface for impalement of tissue.~~

13. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein the crimp or the plug is circular with a diameter substantially equal to the diameter of the larger diameter cylindrical cavity ~~with larger diameter~~ so as to enable resilient fastening.

14. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein the opening between the groove and the tapered ends of the shaft is such that the sum of the width diameter of the suture running along the body of the needle in the groove and the diameter of the tapered end at the point of emergence of the suture out of the groove is lesser less than or equal to the diameter of the shaft at its widest.

15. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein the width of the groove is lesser less than approximately one-third the diameter of the shaft of the suture needle at its widest.

16. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein, excluding the tapering ends of the needle shaft, said shaft is the suture needle is a cylindrical, shaft having a uniform diameter.

17. (Original) An assembly according to claim 1, wherein the suture needle is composed of titanium.

18. (Currently Amended) An assembly according to claim ~~[[1]]~~ 5, wherein the groove ~~recess~~ cavity ~~is provided~~ begins at such ~~the~~ distance from the tip of the suture needle ~~where~~ at which the diameter of the tapering end is equal to the diameter of ~~the~~ narrow section of the suture;

said groove ~~recess~~ cavity gradually deepening at a gradient so that the thickness of the solid portion of the needle is equal to or greater than ~~the~~ its thickness at the point of commencement of the groove.

19. (New) An assembly according to claim 5, wherein said narrow section of the suture is separately provided, where the narrow section is attached to one end of the broad section of the suture.

20. (New) An assembly according to claim 19, wherein the fastening means is provided at one end of said narrow section of the suture.